DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 242 865 CE 038 474

TITLE Vocational Job Preparatory Student Placement and Follow Up in Florida. A Study of the Effectiveness of Policies and Procedures Used for Vocational Job Preparatory Student Placement and Follow Up in Florida's Public Schools.

INSTITUTION Florida State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education, Tallahassee.

PUB DATE Jan 84

NOTE 77p.

PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Career Counseling; *Counseling Effectiveness; Counseling Services; Counseling Techniques; Data Analysis; Data Collection; Educational Policy; Educational Practices; Financial Support; *Followup Studies; Information Needs; Postsecondary Education; Program Effectiveness; Questionnaires; Research Methodology; Research Needs; Research Problems; Research Utilization; Secondary Education; State Surveys; Statewide Planning; *Student Placement; *Vocational Education; *Vocational Followup

IDENTIFIERS *Florida

ABSTRACT

A study examined the effectiveness of policies and procedures used for vocational job preparatory student placement and followup in Florida's public schools. During the study, researchers (1) conducted interviews with approximately 40 persons having statewide knowledge of or involvement in some phase of vocational education placement and followup in Florida, (2) surveyed local level personnel involved in these same endeavors, and (3) mailed questionnaires to representatives of area school districts and community colleges. Based on data collected from all of these sources, the researchers concluded that primary use of vocational student followup results was to comply with state and national requirements. Serious and widespread doubts exist at both the state and local levels concerning the validity of vocational student followup data. Most respondents agreed that local labor market conditions should be considered when interpreting the results of vocational student followup studies. Unless state and local agencies are willing to commit additional resources to student placement and followup efforts, significant improvement in overall services in these areas is doubtful. The state should explore the feasibility of using unemployment insurance data to assist in collecting placement and followup information. (Appended to this report are the survey instrument as well as lists of the types of placement and followup assistance that respondents would like to receive and their suggestions for improving the existing system.) (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED242865

CE

VOCATIONAL JOB PREPARATORY STUDENT PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW UP IN FLORIDA

A study of the effectiveness of policies and procedures used for vocational job preparatory student placement and follow up in Florida's public schools.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J Culligan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CE 038474

THE FLORIDA STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON
VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

JANUARY, 1984

FLORIDA STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL
AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
MEMBERSHIP

Jean W. Austell	Jacksonville
Edward Bleckner, Jr.	Miami
L. Nelson Donnell	Cocoa
James S. Doyle	Miami
Martha Franklin	Lakeland
John H. Frazer, Jr.	Tallahassee
Kathy Garcia	Miami
Lawrence R. Hawkins	Perrine
Katie Keene	Tampa
Thomas E. Kessler	Orlando
C. M. Lawrence	Bushnell
Manuel J. Leon	Coral Gables
Helen K. Leslie	St. Petersburg
Evelyn J. Lewis	Ft. Lauderdale
Judy Lima	Tampa
David H. Lindemann	Ft. Lauderdale
Wayne C. Malone	Dade City
Bobby F. McKown	Lakeland
Kathleen McLeskey	Tallahassee
Jarrett G. Melvin	Fort Walton Beach
Thomas Mills	West Palm Beach
Charles R. Perez	Ft. Lauderdale
Herbert E. Phillips	Lake City
Eugene A. Poole	Lowell
Carl W. Proehl	Pensacola
Wayne D. Rolph	Crystal River
Margaret B. Senne	Palm Bay
Gloria Shumate	St. Petersburg
Howard K. Suzuki	Gainesville
Jackie Young	Riviera Beach

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Council Membership i

PART I: Introduction 1

Purpose of the Study 1
Background of the Study 1
Procedures Used in the Study 3
Review of the Literature 4
Legislation and Its Influence 12

PART II: State Level Assessment 15

Role of System Components 15
Related Information 23
Findings 24

PART III: Local Level Assessment 27

Results of the Survey 27
Summary of Open-End Questions 49

PART IV: Conclusions and Recommendations 57

Conclusions 57
Recommendations 58

APPENDIXES 61

Appendix A: Technical Assistance Needed 63
Appendix B: Improvements Needed in Follow Up 67
Appendix C: Improvements Needed in Placement 71
Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire 75

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Each year the Florida State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education (FSAC) adopts an evaluation plan of work which details the evaluation activities the Council will undertake to deal with the major issues and concerns facing vocational education. One of the major issues identified by the FSAC was the need to determine the effectiveness of activities relating to vocational student placement and follow up. In response to this statewide issue, the Council directed its staff to conduct a study of placement and follow up. This paper describes the results of the FSAC study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of policies and procedures used for vocational job preparatory student placement and follow up in Florida's public schools. The study was divided into two phases:

1. An analysis of policies and procedures at the state level, and an assessment at this level of the effectiveness with which placement and follow up data are used for state level purposes; and

2. A survey of local education agencies to determine:

   a. the use made of follow up data;
   b. the effectiveness with which the data are collected;
   c. the procedures used to collect follow up data, including the levels of responsibility at the local level;
   d. ways to improve the placement and follow up processes; and
   e. the effectiveness of placement services provided to vocational students.

The local level phase of the study was conducted in school districts and community colleges, and included high schools, area vocational-technical centers, and community colleges.

Background of the Study

Placement and follow up efforts in vocational education are like salt and pepper in a well-prepared meal: too much or too little of a good thing can unduly affect the entire result. Whether or not one returns for the next course depends on whether the seasoning matches the meal and whether the meal fulfills the expectations. Placement and follow up have become essential seasonings to the entire process for they

are mandated by federal and state legislation. Whether or not placement and follow up are compliance efforts has become a recurrent issue at both the state and local levels, for programs may be initiated, maintained, or discontinued based on the information collected.

Placement and follow up are not new concerns of the FSAC. For example, in 1976 the FSAC sponsored a study by William B. Stronge and Wayne Villemez at Florida Atlantic University. These researchers suggested developing a longitudinal approach dealing with randomly selected completers whose labor history is traced over the years.

The Council FY 1979 annual evaluation report contained an analysis of follow up data gathered from school district and community college students. It was found that secondary level vocational and technical completers apparently had more difficulty than postsecondary completers in finding employment in jobs for which they have been trained. Additionally, it was noted that placement and follow up procedures needed to be improved.

It is important to differentiate at this point between placement and follow up because they are not synonymous terms. Follow up is an output which is internal to the system while placement is an outcome which is external to the system.

Minimally, placement and follow up are defined by legislation: What is required becomes the standard. As many definitions of placement and follow up exist as do standards. For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will apply:

> Placement: Placement is essentially the assistance a student receives while in transition from a school program to another setting (i.e., jobs, educational institution).
>
> Follow up: Follow up is the process of gathering information from former students for the purpose of promoting educational accountability. Follow up includes but is not limited to mail-out questionnaires, personal contacts, and other means of gathering information which can be conducted on a formal or informal basis.

Two other definitions of importance to this study are those of effectiveness and efficiency. This study will attempt to go beyond the traditional definitions--Is the task accomplished according to the goals and objectives (effectiveness), and is the task accomplished in the best way possible (efficiency)? Of equal importance are questions such as: Is the appropriate task being accomplished? Who currently decides the direction of the work accomplished? Who should decide?

Procedures Used in the Study

In conducting this study, the FSAC used the following procedures:

1. Information was gathered on policies and procedures relating to placement and follow up;

2. Interviews were conducted over a two-month period with approximately 40 persons having statewide knowledge of or involvement in some phase of vocational education placement and follow up in Florida;

3. National experts were contacted and data bases were used;

4. A review of relevant literature was conducted;

5. Documents relevant to placement and follow up were reviewed;

6. Phase I (State Level Assessment) was written;

7. A questionnaire was developed to survey the local level personnel involved in placement and follow up;

8. A draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts;

9. Following review and revision of the questionnaire, the draft questionnaire was field tested at an area vocational-technical center, a school district, and a community college;

10. The questionnaire was mailed to school districts, community colleges, and area vocational-technical centers; and

11. The results of the study were presented to the FSAC for review.

Review of the Literature

It appears as if the increasing interest in accountability has fostered research on the processes and structures of placement and follow up. Most of the available information appropriate to this study was geared toward either the "appropriateness" of rationales for placement and follow up or exemplary practices in placement and follow up procedures.

An often mentioned study in this area The Minnesota Vocational Follow-Up System: Rationale and Methods (Pucel, 1973) compared the information gained through follow up to that of college football films. In both, improvement was the goal. If the historical information is used correctly, the game should improve. If the information is not used, then why is the information gathered?

Pucel pointed out that the ultimate purpose of the information system should determine whether programs are accomplishing organizational goals. He added that information on student output gives information on program effectiveness while information on basic program elements may give reasons why programs may or may not be effective.

The study further addressed the issue of effectiveness as a rationale for placement and follow up by citing four possible reasons for low effectiveness or efficiency:

1. No need for the program to be offered in the first place;

2. Skills learned are not needed in the occupation or in the workplace;

3. Students admitted to the program cannot/do not want to effectively apply the content; and

4. Methods on presenting the content are not adequate.

Another item which provides a fairly comprehensive look at the follow up system was the Evaluation Handbook: Guidelines and Practices for Follow-Up Studies of Former Vocational Education Students (Franchak and Spirer, 1978). The handbook provides a rationale for doing follow up studies, demonstrates how to design and plan follow up studies, discusses procedures and mechanisms for conducting follow up studies, explains data analysis and reporting procedures, and analyzes appropriate use of follow up data and studies. It is primarily a how-to manual but also provides an excellent section on rationale and problems in follow up.

According to Franchak and Spirer, commonly cited problems include:

- Lack of understanding of the purpose of doing follow up;

- Lack of communication of objectives and procedures for doing follow up;

- Lack of clear definitions which are extremely crucial with regard to collecting reliable and valid follow up data;

- Inability or unwillingness of people to use follow up data in decision making.

The National Institute of Education (1980) notes that problems generally stem from the administrator's lack of conviction and lack of federal funding when it comes to gathering accurate and reliable data.

A study entitled Follow-Up Procedures: A National Review (Asche and O'Reilly, 1979) raised additional issues and concerns. Findings were:

- Systematic planning of data collection procedures was not universal;

- Many studies did not have complete and detailed documentation of developmental and operational procedures;

- Many follow up studies lacked quality data;

- Most formats contained little or no interpretation;

- New systems had become operational that were not represented in the review of over 800 articles and reports related to follow up;

- More information on follow up has become more easily accessible;

- Uses of follow up data have not been fully realized; and

- The attitudes of students, employers, and planners toward follow up appeared to be available.

A great deal of information on Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) follow up systems has been published by the Massachusetts Department of Manpower Development and the Employment and Training Administration in Region One. Findings from recent evaluation efforts and issues related to the design, implementation and operation of the follow up evaluation systems are discussed. Technical assistance packages have been developed.

The literature on placement is equally accessible. Placement is often seen as a discrete event rather than a continuous process in which occupational and education decisions consistently interact to affect future placement options (Drier, 1976). If one looks at placement as a component within the system of career guidance, counseling and placement can not be seen as mutually exclusive functions. The fact is that

placement of students entering the labor market has seldom been considered a primary responsibility of the schools.

In Florida, an innovative program entitled the Schools Program was initiated by Governor Bob Graham about a year ago and can be considered an exception to the generalization above. Job placement specialists from the Employment Service (ES) office work hand in hand with occupational specialists in some 17 vocational and 26 high schools in primarily urban areas in Florida. In some schools, ES workers deal with schools on an itinerant basis.

In general, studies on placement appear to be reporting the following findings:

- School placement programs, regardless of setting or size, emphasize college and curricular placement over employment placement. The most successful programs first appoint advisory committees, undertake surveys of student needs and employment opportunities, communicate the program to involved participants, and organize and administer the actual process (Peterson, 1978).

- Three factors crucial to successful placement are a focus on the total system rather than sub-systems, establishment of measurable objectives and goals, and designation of a specific person to coordinate placement as well as deliniate staff functions (Gibson, 1976).

- Higher placement results when:

  + Only students with high interest and high potential are admitted;

  + The surrounding labor market area supports a high demand for workers;

  + The community hosts manufacturing as a major industry;

  + A mix of industry sizes exists in the community;

  + Needs assessments are frequent tools in planning and evaluating vocational education programs;

  + Employers have regular contact with teachers regarding job placement;

  + Student organizations exist to provide job readiness skills;

  + Employer needs are considered when vocational education curriculum is being planned;

  + The focus is on the whole system rather than sub-systems;

  + Measurable goals and objectives are established; and

  + A placement coordinator is designated and staff functions are delineated (Los Angeles Unified School District, 1976).

Placement is seen as the ultimate test of a school's commitment to its students (Wasail, n.d.). Placement consists of accountability, communication, and coordination. Wasail further states that educators

should evaluate their products and modify the curriculum accordingly not unlike major industries. He suggests that initial job placement may not in itself be considered sufficient. Retention on the job and upward mobility are two factors which must be considered in the services provided.

Several research projects and studies conducted in Florida can provide additional insight into the use of placement and follow up data. In 1982, the Division of Vocational Education published the results of a project conducted by the Office of Institutional Research at Broward Community College. The purposes of the study were to identify:

1. exemplary practices in the use of placement and follow up information; and

2. ways in which this information can be used to improve vocational education programs throughout Florida.

The group study for the Handbook of Exemplary Practices in Placement and Follow-Up consisted of persons designated responsible for placement and follow up in all 28 community colleges and 67 school districts in Florida.

Findings as a result of responses to a 17-item mainly open-ended questionnaire were:

- For the most part, institutions are using the data without clearly defined purposes. While approximately half of the responding institutions reported clearly defined procedures for the use of follow up and placement information, just over one-third of the reporting institutions stated the existence of clearly defined goals and objectives;

- Just under half of the reporting institutions indicated that program changes have occurred as a result of placement and follow up. Little attention has been paid to the establishment of standards for program changes;

- Internal communication of placement and follow up results is not pervasive. Only one-third of the community colleges reporting formally communicated the results internally, while 46 percent of school districts reported doing so;

- Advisory committee involvement appears to be stronger in the school districts than in the community colleges; and

- Teacher and counselor involvement in the use of placement and follow up information has been only limited or moderate in both school districts and community colleges.

During the course of the study, nine areas were identified as important to placement and follow up procedures: data collection and analysis,

administrative decision making (management information), employer linkage, job placement, counseling, recruitment of leavers, resource allocation, communication (feedback), and program impact (curriculum). Four school districts and four community colleges were identified as implementing "great ideas" or exemplary practices in the nine areas noted above.

Recommendations with regard to the use of placement and follow up survey results were:

1. The placement and follow up function should be placed in the departmental area that has the expertise to analyze and interpret the findings in terms of their potential impact on curriculum and service offerings, such as the Institutional Research Office or Administrative Services;

2. Positions similar to those of the occupational specialists at the school district level should be funded at the community college level;

3. The Community College Feedback System, as designed by the Division of Community colleges, should be adapted to the needs of the school districts;

4. The person responsible for completing state placement and follow up reports should give direct feedback to administrators, teachers, and counselors, with particular emphasis on the respective purposes and needs of those individuals;

5. The results of placement and follow up surveys should be used as part of an integrated system of feedback for counseling and retaining students, recruiting early leavers, and placing program completers;

6. Administrators should use placement and follow up data to make decisions about adding, expanding, modifying, or deleting programs and services;

7. Placement and follow up information should be used in determining resource allocations at the local level; and

8. Regional workshops in the use of placement and follow up data should be held for administrators, teachers, and counselors. The workshops should focus on the exemplary uses identified in the handbook and should include research design material that enables participants to understand the dangers of generalizing from results based on a low rate of return.

A second study which examined the use of placement and follow up data is a project funded by the Florida Department of Education. This study entitled "Study of Placement and Follow-Up Programs in Selected Florida Secondary Schools" and directed by Dr. Joyce Chick at Florida State University was designed to answer the following questions:

- What services are rendered in secondary school placement and follow up programs?

- How are these services rendered? (By whom; i.e., occupational specialist or counselor)

- What are the training needs of personnel involved in placement and follow up?

A random sample of Florida counselors and occupational specialists in selected secondary schools is currently being surveyed. Information sought is especially geared to minority populations; i.e., females, handicapped persons, and special education students. Findings from this study are currently unavailable.

A third study conducted in Florida presented a management model for the uses of follow up information in occupational programs (Newton, 1981). The study document purports to insure the local usefulness of follow up data in evaluating program effectiveness and in improving vocational guidance services for occupational students. The model was designed to combat the nonsystem of follow up which was formerly accompanied by lack of interpretation, communication, and decision making.

Additional work on follow up in Florida includes the Florida Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (FLOICC) with its identification in 1982 of the coordination of agency data systems that collect follow up information on program participants as a priority area for research.

As a result of a symposium on follow up activities of state education, employment, and training, FLOICC through its Technical Assistance Group, identified several common concerns: duplication and overlapping efforts among agencies; lack of consistent requirements regarding occupational taxonomies; the timing and frequency of follow up efforts; and a lack of participant coverage.

A report by FLOICC in 1982 entitled Education, Employment and Training Follow Up Requirements and Programs in Florida Common Labor Market Participation Information and Potential Data Resources presented the following issues and recommendations:

- Despite differences in detail, format, and definition, commonalities in terms of labor market participation data are sought through follow up programs in Florida's education, employment, and training agencies. The coordination of collection of follow up data is suggested due to these commonalities as well as the fact that clients frequently are involved with several agencies simultaneously. This coordination can be facilitated if maximum use of information resources already in existence is made. At some point, this may require redirection of some agency follow up requirements and priorities as well as concepts regarding information and use by some of the agencies.

- Coordination of state education employment and training follow up programs can be increased by adopting standard definitions and labor market participation information requirements. Also, elimination of duplicative data collection efforts among all agencies involved in the process is recommended.

- Existing resources that meet data needs and are accessible should be used. At least four of the seven core labor market participation data elements could be provided through existing resources.

It should be noted that FLOICC's primary interest regarding the collection of follow up data lies in the improvement of the state's Occupational Information System. Follow up data is seen as an important tool in developing an occupational information system as well as in assessing program delivery and strategies.

A fourth study relating to follow up is the 1982 Vocational Education Study completed by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budgeting. Although this study was not directed toward an in depth analysis of placement or follow up, the study does contain what is perhaps the most recent broad based presentation of follow up data.

Two accountability measures for assessing the effectiveness of vocational training programs--training related employment rates and unemployment rates--were analyzed in this study. Available follow up data from the Divisions of Vocational Education and Community Colleges were used. Due to the fact that the Division of Vocational Education did not conduct follow up for the 1980-81 school year, only data from the 1978-79 and 1979-80 school years were analyzed.

Data on the employment status of 1978-79 and 1979-80 vocational program completers and leavers were reported according to:

1. institution type and program cluster; (Program cluster is defined in this study as "broad subject matter area");

2. institution type and program area; (Program area is defined as a "principal segment of the subject matter area.");

3. student characteristics of sex, race, disadvantaged, and handicapped;

4. geographic area (regional planning council jurisdiction) and program cluster; and

5. program clusters ranked by unemployment status.

General findings were:

- Unemployment rates of community college completers for 1980 fell well below overall state unemployment figures.

- Unemployment rates of area vo-tech school completers for 1980 fell both above and below state unemployment rates. Most program clusters show higher rates of unemployment for 1980 program graduates than the overall state unemployment rates.

- Unemployment rates for completers of comprehensive high school programs fell both above and below overall state unemployment rates. Most program clusters show higher rates of unemployment for program completers than overall state unemployment rates.

- Unemployment rates for 1980 completers from other high school programs were all above state unemployment rates for that year.

As part of their analysis, a major conclusion of the study was:

> On the whole and except for one of the program cluster areas, community colleges have better training-related placement and lower unemployment rates than area vocational-technical institutions. Comprehensive high schools have training-related placement rates that are far below those for both community colleges and vocational-technical institutions and an unemployment rate that is slightly higher than the vo-tech rate.

Other conclusions were:

- The health program cluster generally has the highest training-related placement rates across all institutions;

- Black students in high schools and vo-tech institutions have a substantially higher unemployment rate and lower training-related placement rate than white students;

- Female students in high schools and vo-tech institutions have a higher training-related placement rate than males; and

- Females from public schools have a substantially higher unemployment rate than males.

LEGISLATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW UP

Legislation is at the crux of the issue of placement and follow up. Therefore, an in-depth look at the laws and regulations governing the policies and procedures was in order.

Nationally, the need for placement and follow up data was given an impetus with the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (P.L. 88-210) and the Educational Amendments of 1976 (P.L. 94-482).

The need for evaluating each vocational program was mandated in Section 112(b):

> "(b) each State shall evaluate, by using data collected, wherever possible, by statistically valid sampling techniques, each such program within the State which purports to impart entry level job skills according to the extent to which program completers and leavers--
>
> > "(i) find employment in occupations related to their training, and
> > "(ii) are considered by their employers to be well-trained and prepared for employment,
>
> except that in no case can pursuit of additional education or training by program completers or leavers be considered negatively in these evaluations."

Clearly, those who pursue additional training or obtain training-related placements can be considered to be positive measures of program effectiveness.

With the inception of the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) came attempts to create a uniform, standard national reporting system (this included follow up information). All state and local programs supplemented with federal funds had to submit data in compliance with standard information requirements.

School districts and community colleges were initially given required forms to be filled out by former students for later compilation into data for federal reporting requirements. Now, all program delivery systems within both the community colleges and the public school sector are given lists of designated, ordered questions which must be included in follow up. Adding local questions to get information useful for program improvement is informally encouraged, but not required. Thus local education agencies now have a wide degree of freedom to design locally mailed follow up questionnaires.

Responsibility for providing placement services and conducting follow up was assigned to the school districts (State Law 230.62.6 and State Rule 6A-6.71) and the community colleges (State Rule 6A-14.55(2)). Additionally, in the community colleges, the boards of trustees were directed to establish and maintain placement and follow up with adjustment in curricula based on the results (6A-14.55). The Division of Vocational Education and the Department of Education clearly were to provide technical and advisory support.

Definitions for follow up studies and placement services were provided (6A-6.71-6a). Armed with the responsibility and the definitions, the school districts and community colleges were given guidelines on acceptable methodology (6A-6.71.7-9, 230.2313-1d, and 6A-14.55).

Local institutions can choose to contact all former vocational students or an appropriate sample based on their needs.

Recently, five pieces of state legislation were enacted with implications for placement and follow up. At this point, it is unclear what the implications of enactment of HB38BA, SB6-B, SB7-B, SB16-B and SB38-B (all 1983 Florida legislation bills) will be. The most specific reference to placement and follow up in the legislation appears to be the directive, in SB6-B, Section 15c, to each of the 28 newly established regional coordinating councils to conduct an analysis of current vocational training, counseling, and placement programs. A list of prioritized regional opportunities and problems which can be addressed as well as an identification of potential state, federal and funding sources is to be filed with the Commissioner of Education. Labor and demand information from the Florida Occupational Information System is to be included in this report.

Recommendations regarding the "creation, modification or termination of vocational programs . . ." will be made by the councils in writing to the region's community college board of trustees and the school boards. In the case of failures to reach agreement, appeals can be made to the State Board of Education for fiscal agency action (SB6-B15d).

Additionally, the regional councils will submit annual reports describing all actions taken to address needs, priorities, and deficiencies to the Commissioner of Education. Agreements will be developed assigning fiscal and program responsibility to:

1. Either the local community college board of trustees;

2. One or more of the school boards in the region; or

3. A shared arrangement between the local community college and a school board(s) specifically agreed to by the council in vocational education program delivery at the secondary level (SB6-B Section 15b).

These directives appear to link accountability for fiscal and program decisions with the same policy-makers. How these will be carried out is unknown at the present time.

PART II

STATE LEVEL ASSESSMENT

Role and Responsibilities of System Components

Placement and follow up are assumed to be processes within interactive systems. The word "system" denotes interdependency or interaction of components or parts, and an identifiable wholeness or Gestalt (French and Bell, p. 74).

The interdependency, interaction and Gestalt of the system from which placement and follow up operate are of particular importance to this study. Informal and formal processes are at work; task and maintenance functions are to be carried out.

The primary components of the system of placement and follow up at the nonlocal level of operation which will be examined in this section are:

1. The Florida Department of Education (DOE);
2. The DOE Division of Vocational Education;
3. The DOE Division of Public Schools;
4. The DOE Division of Community Colleges;
5. State Board of Independent Postsecondary Vocational, Technical, Trade and Business Schools;
6. Department of Labor and Employment Security (DLES); and
7. Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS).

Florida Department of Education

The role of the Department of Education in the follow up process has changed considerably in the last year. For example, the state will no longer supply standard follow up forms to school districts, but will instead ask local education agencies to submit information in seven categories, which are required by the federal government.

In summary form, the way school districts now handle follow up of former vocational education students proceeds as such:

1. Information is given to the school districts as to the data required by the state. This information is contained in the booklet Placement and Follow-Up Program Reports Instruction Manual;

2. The local education agencies send out the actual follow up forms, which they have prepared themselves. School districts may add any items to the required seven, if they choose to do so;

3. The data resulting from the follow up are tabulated at the local level, and aggregate data are put on state forms and sent to the Department of Education. The follow up is supposed to take place between January and March and the aggregate data are due in Tallahassee by June 15. The primary documents remain at the local level; and

4. The Department of Education compiles the information on a statewide basis and sends the state totals to the federal level. The results are also used to prepare selected tables in the annual state plan and accountability report for vocational education.

Technical assistance in the follow up process has been provided by the Department of Education to the local education agencies. For example, the state developed and distributed a booklet Making Effective Use of Educational Follow-Up Information and conducted workshops and meetings with local school personnel involved in follow up. It should be emphasized that placement and follow up are the processes and results of interdivisional cooperation.

Division of Vocational Education

The Division of Vocational Education is, in one interviewee's terms, a "middle-of-the-roader" when it comes to placement and follow up. The Division is not responsible for only one particular delivery system (i.e., the community colleges or school districts) but must be responsive to any educational unit in which vocational education takes place.

Reported responsibilities within this Division include:

- Submission of a five-year plan for vocational education that allows transmission of federal funds to local systems which are in compliance with federal rules and guidelines. A major section of the five-year plan involves placement and follow up data.

- Preparation of federally mandated reports. This information is gathered through the students who answer questionnaires sent out by the school districts and community colleges. Required questions on student and employer survey forms due to federal and state reporting requirements are identified by the Evaluation Section in the Bureau of Vocational Research, Dissemination and Evaluation. Once statewide aggregate data are compiled, analyses may be initiated from within the Department on specific questions.

- Technical assistance to school districts and community colleges is primarily offered in the communication of information which is needed for state and federal reporting requirements. An annual workshop on changes in reporting requirements is held during the summer vocational educators' conference. An additional area that could be considered technical assistance is the federal money for placement and follow up which can be made available by the Division of Vocational Education to those systems which successfully go through the annual applications process--submission of applications in March, screening through June, and notification of funding in July. According to the State Plan FY 1983-87, funds may be used to:

  1. Expand and improve placement services to assist students in their transition to employment or non-traditional vocational education (includes CAPS).

Total Dollars (000's)

1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
142.0	156.4	172.0	189.3	208.2

  2. Develop programs and practices to help professional educators interpret placement and follow up data in order to plan vocational program renewal and improve support services.

1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
17.0	18.7	20.6	22.7	25.0

- The Management Planning, Information and Budget Services section in the Bureau of Vocational Planning and Budgeting is responsible for compiling the data gathered by the Division of Community Colleges Bureau of Research and Information Systems and the Division of Public Schools Management Information Systems section. They are also responsible for putting the information into acceptable form to the federal government, Florida legislature (as requested), and local systems (if feedback is desired).

- Placement as a service is not considered to be a direct responsibility of this Division. Yet, the Center for Career Development Services, which is administratively located within the Bureau of Vocational Research, Dissemination and Evaluation, currently offers three services directed at placement and occupational information:

1. The Cooperative Agency Placement System (CAPS). Last year was the first full year that CAPS, as a computerized statewide placement system, was fully operational. The system works interactively among its four components--employers, schools or agencies, job-seekers, and HELP, a listing mailed to participating employers quarterly. HELP gives employers information on interested persons who have the training for which the employer earlier expressed an interest. If job-seekers do not fill out cards updating their employment interests and recording their employment status, they are removed from the system. In 1981-82 and from January, 1983 through March 31, 1983, approximately 9,173 job seekers and 31,336 employers have participated in the system. Some 531 applicants were placed during this period. CAPS also conducts:

   a. a skills bank of retired military personnel;
   b. a skills bank of international retirees;
   c. a catalog of persons seeking teaching positions in Florida;
   d. a computerized listing of job openings in Florida school districts;
   e. a 21-module employability skills program;
   f. cooperative efforts with the Florida State Employment Service to share placement data; and
   g. delivery of CAPS components through the CHOICES network.

2. CHOICES (Computerized Heuristic Occupation Information Career Exploration System) is a computerized career guidance system allows users to access information on over 1,000 careers and get a list of occupations tailored to meet their unique needs. CHOICES Job Bank--a daily listing of Florida job openings provided through the Florida State Employment Service is a second benefit of this system.

3. Vital Information for Education and Work (VIEW) is a client-centered career and educational system in which 586 career descriptions and information on over 320 postsecondary institutions can be accessed. This resource tool undergoes continuous revision.

At the time this report was written, several legislative proposals involving these systems were under consideration:

1. The establishment of a "Jobs for Our Graduates (JOG) Placement Program," designed to provide a transition from school to work in private, nonsubsidized jobs for those high school graduating seniors who are neither college bound nor in vocational training programs.

2. The establishment of county job banks to help high school students entering the work force for the first time or without appreciable work experience.

3. Assistance to school boards and district personnel in identifying their current and projected recruitment/placement needs, helping them to meet these needs, and supplementing their ongoing activities through Job Fairs, newsletters, training, "generic" advertising, workshops and analysis.

Division of Public Schools

Required information from final class reports for the previous fiscal year is transferred to computer tapes by the school districts and sent to the Division of Public Schools Management Information System (MIS) section by August 31. The format for the information depends on the forms used by the school districts. According to one state level official, "school districts usually designed their own forms, but with the requirement of computerized tapes, many school districts returned to the use of the state designed two-year old form because it included all the required questions." The 1983-84 data will be turned in on an aggregate basis.

By October 1, the MIS section creates a data entry file at the regional data center at FSU. Tapes are edited for errors (errors, in this context, mean mistakes in column totals, not possible problems in data integrity) and resubmitted to the school districts for correction as necessary. Any additional data or changes are added to the data entry file. When acceptably completed, the section director of Management Planning, Information and Budget Services in the Bureau of Vocational Planning and Budgeting, Division of Vocational Education is contacted. That section then further processes the information and puts it into acceptable format for submission to the federal government in December. This is, in part, referred to as the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS), a national reporting system that includes follow up information.

Last year follow up was not carried out because of lateness and nonsubmission of data, according to several state level officials. The districts which were not in compliance were Vocational Education Data On Students (VEDOS) participants. DOE software and processes had been promised; the districts which took up the offer were unable to get the data in on time.

It should be noted that within the Division of Public Schools exists a section which performs several important roles regarding placement and follow up. The Student Services Section of the Bureau of Program Support Services acts as a liaison with the Division of Vocational Education. For the last three years, student services (of which placement and follow up are a part) have been surveyed in compliance and program reviews. These audits have looked at whether services are in existence and if the school boards are informed. In cases of noncompliance with Florida State Statute 230.2313 and Florida School Board Rule 6A-6.71, superintendents report back to the Division after rectifying the problem(s). Additionally, as school districts request technical assistance to either maintain or improve their placement and follow up programs, the Student Services Section provides periodic workshops. A selected group of persons representing the school districts in both the areas of academic and vocational placement and follow up informally provides advice regarding recurrent problems and issues. The section also informally reviews district plans for annual follow up and placement reports before the plans are submitted.

Division of Community Colleges

Required information on program leavers and completers is provided by the community colleges to the Division of Community Colleges Bureau of Research and Information systems by computer tapes. The data is then matched with two other data sources--State University System Student Data (university enrollment and major area of study) and the Department of Labor's Employment and Security Information Data (industrial classifications of places of employment, weeks worked quarterly, and quarterly earnings).

All students completing a vocational education job preparatory program or leaving the program with marketable skills are sent questionnaires.

In summary, the functions of this Division with respect to placement and follow up are technical assistance to the colleges (as requested) and liaison work between the community colleges and state government. Technical assistance regarding placement and follow up has been provided by the Division since 1977. More complete ways to use data through the provision of an effective program review process are considered to be part of the technical assistance provided. Information on placement and follow up can be made available dependent upon approval by the Division of Community Colleges.

State Board of Independent Postsecondary Vocational, Technical, Trade and Business Schools

Though it was not the purpose of this study to include private vocational schools, some information about placement and follow up at private institutions was considered to be worthwhile. Contact was made with the State Board of Independent Postsecondary Vocational, Technical, Trade and Business Schools. In addition, a visit was made to a private technical institute to discuss placement and follow up of students. From these sources, limited observations were made.

Private schools operate within state approved guidelines and statutes. License applications of private postsecondary training institutions require that schools applying for licensure provide information on the labor force status of program graduates for each program of training. No standard definitions or procedures in meeting this requirement appear to exist. Each applicant for licensure is required to submit a catalog that includes "a detailed and explicit description of the extent and nature of placement assistance, if any, available to students and/or graduates." Some 248 schools are currently licensed by the Board.

In general, placement and follow up procedures vary from school to school depending on such factors as number of students, number of personnel, type and length of training, etc.

At the one private school visited it was noted that a placement director and a staff of four handled all of the placement and follow up services for the approximately 2,000 students. Teachers were not involved in the process. The placement office assisted students while in school by: helping them get part-time jobs; finding suitable housing; preparing resumes; and arranging job interviews. Follow up was conducted at regular intervals--three, six, and twelve months--and the results were distributed to teachers and administrators.

The information gathered from follow up is used to make internal improvements at the school and to supply data required by agencies such as the Veterans Administration.

Department of Labor and Employment Security (DLES)

This Department's role in the placement and follow up of former vocational students centered on the compilation of locally collected data on clients served under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). Those CETA participants who were shown as positive terminations from programs conducted by subcontractors to the Balance of State prime sponsor were followed up thirty, sixty, and ninety days after leaving the programs. The data were compiled at the state level; however, it does not appear that the data were collected and analyzed on a statewide basis. It is not clear as to what use was made of the data.

Under the newly authorized Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which replaces CETA, each of the service delivery areas will follow up on its own participants. As with CETA, it is not clear as to how these data will be used at the state and local levels.

It should be remembered that the vast majority of CETA clients received their vocational training in public school districts and community colleges. The same will probably hold true under JTPA. This is especially important in a study of placement and follow up because the CETA clients were being followed up by two different entities, though participating in only one training program.

Consideration is being given by the Department of Labor and Employment Security to the use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) forms, and the welfare files furnished by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (DHRS).

Placement services for CETA participants were provided at the local level by prime sponsors, subcontractors, and local education agencies. It does not appear as if any statewide assessment has been made of the placement services provided to CETA participants.

An innovative program entitled the Schools Program was initiated by Governor Graham about a year ago when budget cuts were instigated by President Reagan. Job placement specialists from the Employment Service (ES) Office work hand in hand with occupational specialists in 19 vocational technical programs and 26 high schools in primarily urban areas in Florida. In some schools, ES workers deal with schools on an itinerant basis. From October 1982 through May 1983, 1,893 students were placed.

Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (DHRS)

This Department has an indirect but important role to play in the statewide follow up process. Section 106(b)(1) of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) states that "The basic measure of performance for adult training programs under Title II is the increase in employment and earnings and the reductions in welfare dependency resulting from participation in the program."

In Florida, HRS will supply information on welfare recipients, primarily AFDC (Aid for Dependent Children) participants, to the local service delivery areas established by the state under JTPA provisions. Essentially, there will be a need to determine if the AFDC participants were able, because of training received in the JTPA programs, to reduce welfare dependency. The actual follow up will be done by the service delivery areas, but the information will be shared with HRS. There are indications that this joint effort might be of use for current food stamp recipients.

The situation thus arises whereby a local education agency will be involved in the placement and follow up of a student participating in a JTPA funded program, and who is receiving welfare payments. Three state agencies--Education, Labor and Employment Security, and Health and Rehabilitative Services--are either directly or indirectly concerned with collecting data from the same individual participating in a single program.

In January 1983, HRS released the first-year findings for a study it conducted of food stamp recipients. The study found relationships between work and education characteristics of the participants and the receipt of food stamps. The study is scheduled to continue for two more years and should be of use to those who plan vocational programs for the disadvantaged.

Related Information

During the period in which this report was written, it was unknown what the implications of the following influences on placement and follow up would be:

(a) **The Linkage of Funding to Placement.** Several developments were seen in this direction. The draft copy of "Performance Standards for Vocational Education" was being discussed by various policymakers at the state level.

If the proposed Performance Standards for Vocational Education were to be adopted as stated in the draft copy, vocational education programs will be directly responsible for follow up procedures which yield a 90 percent contact rate and a 70 percent return rate. At least 50 percent of secondary students and 60 percent of the postsecondary students who have completed 50 percent or more of the vocational education competencies and have exited the school will: (1) have become employed in occupations requiring the use of competencies acquired; (2) have entered the military; or (3) have continued on to postsecondary or additional postsecondary programs.

Sanctions for noncompliance would include a warning the first year; after noncompliance, probation the second year; and termination of state funds the third year.

An additional impetus to the issue of tying funding with placement was the 1983 legislature's authorization of funding for a study of Florida's public and proprietary job preparatory vocational education programs (SB-1B).

Included in this study to be conducted by the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) will be recommendations related to the use of placement rates in determining the eligibility of vocational programs for funding. A report on the findings is to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education by March 1, 1984.

(b) **Measuring and Reporting on Excellence in Education.** The State Board of Education recently adopted a set of indicators to measure progress toward the statewide goal of educational achievement in Florida at the upper quartile of states within five years. On July 17 State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.243 was adopted requiring each school district and higher education institution to develop a plan for progress toward this goal and to make an annual report regarding implementation of this plan as of October 1, 1984.

The public school indicators which relate specifically to placement and follow up include the percent of vocational students employed in their area of training (output indicator), the percent of employers expressing above average satisfaction with the work performance of students trained in vocational programs (opinion indicator).

The community college indicators include the findings of follow up studies of graduates and licensure examination results of graduates (output indicators).

FINDINGS

During the interviews at the state level, information was requested regarding the strengths, weaknesses and needed changes in placement and follow up. Additionally, concerns relating to policies and procedures were sought out. These responses plus an analysis of documents and a review of the literature resulted in the following findings:

1. Very little use is made of vocational student follow up data at the state level. When the data are used it is primarily for compliance or procedural purposes, such as the state plan for vocational education;

2. Other than the Division of Community Colleges, no state level agency is conducting consistent and systematic analyses of placement and follow up information;

3. There is unwarranted duplication of state level requirements for follow up data;

4. There is a need to increase interagency coordination and communication regarding the requirements for and collection of follow up data;

5. Timeliness regarding the collection of data and the system's use of the data is a severe problem. Even if communication of follow up data was to be promoted, time gaps are apparent.

6. State level personnel do not think that school districts are as sophisticated as community colleges with regard to the collection of follow up data. The 1983-84 data which are to be reported in the aggregate will cause districts to develop one additional step in their follow up process. It should be noted that community colleges already aggregate follow up data. Both school districts and community colleges are now responsible for developing their own questionnaires, printing, mailing, receiving, and reporting the data to their respective divisions;

7. Technical assistance on the part of DOE ranges from staying out of the way to mandating compliance. Some state level officials wanted to know what assistance (if any) school districts and community colleges desire;

8. If the word "system" is to be applied to the processes and structures of follow up and placement, the term must be used loosely. It is conceivable that placement and follow up activities are carried out 28 different ways in the community colleges and 67 different ways in the school districts;

9. There is some confusion about the definitions of terms used in placement and follow up. For example, the two terms "placement" and "follow up" were used interchangeably, and there is no overall agreement on the term "completer";

10. No one person is acting as an ombudsperson for the entire placement and follow up system. In other words, the right hand does not often know what the left is doing. Even more importantly, there is no "system" per se other than those mechanisms required for legislature compliance;

11. Many state level persons interviewed do not think that follow up data are valid. Reasons cited for invalid data included low response rates, misinterpretation of data, and delays in getting the information;

12. Many state level personnel perceive school districts and community colleges as performing poorly to very well when it comes to local level placement and follow up;

13. The two main problems associated with the use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) files for follow up information are: (1) the lack of occupational indentifiers for employees, and (2) the lack of a requirement for vocational job preparatory students to have social security numbers;

14. Low response rates continue to be of concern. State level personnel on the whole are aware that improvement may not be possible without additional resources;

15. There appears to be little sense of ownership of the decision making role regarding placement and follow up at the state level;

16. No incentives for excellent placement and follow up efforts and no penalties for poor efforts appear to promote the idea that the reason for placement and follow up is legislative compliance; and

17. The formal exchange of information regarding the products and processes of placement and follow up is rare to nonexistent.

PART III

LOCAL LEVEL ASSESSMENT

This part of the report contains the findings which resulted from a survey of local education agency personnel who are involved in administering or supervising the placement and follow up of vocational job preparatory students. The survey form (pp. 75-80) was developed, field tested, and mailed by the FSAC.

The groups included in the survey were:

School districts--local vocational directors and county guidance directors;

Community colleges--occupational deans, guidance directors, and persons in charge of follow up;

Comprehensive high schools--principals and guidance directors.

In some cases there was duplication of offices held by individuals to be surveyed. Every attempt was made to eliminate this duplication in the number of survey forms which were sent out.

Table 1 (p. 28) contains the response rates of the survey. The overall response rate of 81 percent was deemed high enough to allow fairly valid conclusions to be drawn from a review of the descriptive data. It was particularly pleasing to the Council to note the high return rates provided by local vocational directors, community college occupational deans, area vocational-technical center directors, and comprehensive high school principals.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The survey instrument used in this study was designed in such a way that all persons surveyed, in all four delivery system groupings, were asked the same questions. The only notable difference was that persons at the school district offices were asked questions in terms of their district, rather than in terms of a specific institution.

Question one on the survey form asked which person in the district or institution was most directly responsible for conducting follow up of former job preparatory vocational students. Table 2 (p. 29) shows the responses to that question. It appears as if occupational specialists play a large role in conducting follow up in school districts, area centers, and high schools. Institutional researchers conduct a good deal of the follow up in community colleges. The "Other" category responses were analyzed and it was found that the follow up responsibility is often given to guidance counselors, and placement and follow up specialists, and administrative staff not listed on the survey form.

TABLE 1

OVERALL RESPONSE RATES TO FSAC SURVEY - BY AGENCY AND JOB TITLE

Agency and Job Title	Number Surveyed	Usable Response Rate (Percent)
School Districts:		
Local Vocational Directors	67	94%
District Guidance Directors	66	71%
Total/Response Rate	133	83%
Community Colleges:		
Occupational Deans	27	96%
Guidance Directors	27	52%
Follow Up Persons	16	75%
Total/Response Rate	70	74%
Area Vocational Centers:		
Center Directors	26	96%
Guidance Directors	31	81%
Total/Response Rate	57	88%
Comprehensive High Schools:		
Principals	62	89%
Guidance Directors	62	71%
Total/Response Rate	124	80%
OVERALL TOTAL/RESPONSE RATE	384	81%

TABLE 2

PERCENT OF RESPONSES INDICATING WHO IS MOST DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE IN THE DISTRICT/INSTITUTION FOR CONDUCTING FOLLOW UP OF FORMER VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

Persons Responsible	Districts	Colleges	Area Centers	High Schools	Overall
Vocational Director	37%	0	0	0	13%
Guidance Director	8%	10%	4%	12%	9%
Occupational Specialist	35%	0	56%	71%	44%
Principal	0	0	0	0	0
Area Center Director	1%	0	0	2%	1%
Occupational Dean	0	10%	0	0	2%
Vocational Teachers	4%	2%	4%	7%	5%
Institutional Researcher	2%	46%	0	0	8%
Other	11%	33%	32%	8%	17%
N/A*	3%	0	4%	0	2%

*N/A = includes no answer and unusable responses.

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. The same holds true for all applicable tables in Part III.

The persons being surveyed were asked how often during a school year their district or institution conducted vocational student follow up. Eighty-one percent said "once," and 16 percent indicated that follow up occurred two or more times during a school year (Table 3, p. 31).

The next question on the form asked which persons are given the results of vocational student follow up. The results are shown on Table 4 (p. 32). Those identified as "Other" included: local vocational directors, superintendents, school board members, local advisory committee members, college trustees, academic teachers, and various other persons.

Table 5 (p. 33) lists the responses given to the question of what uses are made of the results of vocational student follow up. It appears as if the primary uses are to improve programs, comply with state requirements, change curriculum, and student counseling. Other uses not listed dealt mainly with the use of the data to help prepare various reports.

The respondents split evenly in their assessment of the validity of data provided through follow up (Table 6, p. 34). As can be seen, community college respondents rated the data as valid more often than the other three groups.

If the respondent indicated he or she did not think the data were valid, then the next question asked for responses as to why the data were not valid. Over 80 percent indicated "low response rate" was a reason (Table 7, p. 35). The next highest rated reason was "confusion over how to interpret results." Responses to the reason called "Other" included problems dealing with the classification of program completers and leavers.

Those surveyed were asked to identify the main reasons for low response rates to student follow up. The major reason given was student apathy, or lack of understanding as to the importance of the survey. The mobility of the students after completion was also noted as an important reason.

When asked if they thought there was a need for technical assistance to be provided on how to effectively conduct student follow up, 50 percent of the respondents said "yes" (Table 8, p. 36).

The survey form included a question of what type of technical assistance the persons surveyed thought would be most helpful to them. A list of the responses is included in the appendix of this report (see pp. 63-65). In general, technical assistance appears to be needed on the basic elements involved in conducting follow up. Particularly needed is assistance in the design of questionnaires, how to achieve results, and how to intelligently interpret the results.

The next item on the survey form asked the respondents their opinion as to how worthwhile they thought the results of vocational student

TABLE 3

PERCENT OF RESPONSES INDICATING THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE DISTRICT/INSTITUTION CONDUCTS FOLLOW UP OF FORMER VOCATIONAL STUDENTS DURING A SCHOOL YEAR

Frequency of Follow Up During Year	Districts	Colleges	Area Centers	High Schools	Overall
None	0	2%	2%	0	1%
Once	90%	79%	52%	86%	81%
Twice	7%	10%	26%	9%	11%
More than two times	2%	8%	14%	3%	5%
N/A	1%	2%	6%	2%	2%

TABLE 4

PERCENT OF RESPONSES INDICATING WHICH PERSONS ARE GIVEN THE RESULTS OF VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP

Persons Who Are Given The Results	Districts	Colleges	Area Centers	High Schools	Overall
Vocational Teachers	76%	83%	90%	71%	77%
Guidance Director	66%	46%	80%	66%	65%
Occupational Specialist	56%	6%	58%	61%	49%
Principal	72%	0	48%	79%	66%
Occupational Dean	3%	90%	2%	0	16%
Other College Administrators	1%	89%	4%	1%	16%
Area Center Director	35%	2%	78%	16%	30%
No One	0	0	0	0	0
Other	38%	29%	34%	29%	33%
N/A	2%	0	0	0	2%

NOTE: Percentages total more than 100 percent due to multiple responses. Respondents were asked to check "all that apply."

TABLE 5

PERCENT OF RESPONSES INDICATING WHAT USES ARE MADE OF THE RESULTS OF VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP

Uses Made Of The Results	Districts	Colleges	Area Centers	High Schools	Overall
Improve Programs	67%	90%	86%	72%	76%
Change Curriculum	49%	83%	64%	65%	62%
Teacher Evaluations	13%	21%	16%	6%	13%
Comply With State Requirements	78%	83%	64%	75%	76%
Student Counseling	28%	50%	46%	44%	40%
Facility Planning	16%	29%	36%	27%	25%
Not Used	4%	2%	2%	0	2%
Other	6%	10%	10%	4%	6%
N/A	4%	0	0	1%	2%

NOTE: Respondents were asked to check all uses that applied.

TABLE 6

PERCENT OF RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU THINK THE DATA PROVIDED THROUGH STUDENT FOLLOW UP ARE VALID?"

Persons Responding	Percent Responding: Yes	No	N/A
School Districts:			
Local Vocational Directors	37%	59%	5%
District Guidance Directors	34%	57%	9%
Average	36%	58%	6%
Community Colleges:			
Occupational Deans	54%	46%	0
Guidance Directors	64%	36%	0
Follow Up Persons	755	25%	0
Average	62%	39%	0
Area Vocational Centers:			
Center Directors	52%	36%	12%
Guidance Directors	44%	52%	4%
Average	48%	44%	8%
Comprehensive High Schools:			
Principals	62%	38%	0
Guidance Directors	48%	50%	2%
Average	56%	43%	1%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	48%	48%	4%

TABLE 7

PERCENT OF RESPONSES INDICATING REASONS
WHY FOLLOW UP DATA ARE NOT VALID

Reasons	Districts	Colleges	Area Centers	High Schools	Overall
Low Response Rate	76%	63%	89%	93%	81%
Wrong Questions Asked	22%	17%	39%	22%	24%
Confusion Over How To Interpret Results	38%	38%	42%	33%	37%
Results Not Shared In Time To Be Useful	25%	29%	42%	31%	30%
Problems In Identifying Job Preparatory Students	27%	21%	39%	31%	29%
Other	30%	25%	46%	7%	25%

NOTE: Respondents were asked to check all reasons that applied.

TABLE 8

PERCENT OF RESPONSES GIVEN TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU THINK THERE IS A NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY CONDUCT STUDENT FOLLOW UP?"

Persons Responding	Is Technical Assistance Needed: Yes	No	N/A
School Districts:			
Local Vocational Directors	59%	37%	5%
District Guidance Directors	40%	53%	6%
Average	51%	44%	5%
Community Colleges:			
Occupational Deans	54%	46%	0
Guidance Directors	43%	57%	0
Follow Up Persons	42%	50%	8%
Average	48%	50%	2%
Area Vocational Centers:			
Center Directors	60%	36%	4%
Guidance Directors	56%	44%	0
Average	58%	40%	2%
Comprehensive High Schools:			
Principals	40%	56%	4%
Guidance Directors	52%	43%	5%
Average	45%	51%	4%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	50%	46%	4%

follow up are in terms of the resources (time, money) used to get the results (Table 9, p. 38). Forty-eight percent said the results were "somewhat worthwhile," 33 percent said the results were of "very little value," and 14 percent said the results were "very worthwile."

Seventy-one percent of the respondents think that there is a need to continue the requirement for vocational student follow up (Table 10, p. 39).

Forty-two percent think that the results of vocational student follow up are used at the state level for vocational planning. About the same percent think the results are not used for planning purposes (Table 11, p. 40).

The respondents appear to be about evenly split on the question of the degree to which follow up results offer an accurate indication of the effectiveness of the training students received in vocational programs (Table 12, p. 41). Forty-eight percent said the results "seldom" offer an accurate indication, and 47 percent said the results "often" are an accurate indicator. Mixed responses were given to the question of how important those surveyed thought follow up results are in evaluating vocational programs (Table 13, p. 42). Over one-third of the respondents said the results are of little or no importance in evaluating local vocational programs.

When given a set of criteria and asked to choose the one they thought most important in deciding whether to continue offering a vocational program, seven percent indicated job-related placement rates as the major criterion (Table 14, p 43). However, when given the same set of criteria and asked to identify which one was the least important, placement rates ranked as the most frequently chosen criterion (Table 15, p. 44).

Forty-three percent of those surveyed said the results of vocational student follow up are provided in time to be useful (Table 16, p. 45). However, 38 percent said the results are provided too late or not at all.

About one-half of the respondents think that their district or institution assigns a "medium" priority to vocational student follow up; 30 percent say the priority is "low"; and 19 percent indicate a "high" priority (Table 17, p. 46).

Over forty percent of the respondents think there is confusion at the local level as to what the terms "program completer" and "program leaver" mean (Table 18, p. 47). There does not appear to be as much confusion over the terms "placement" and "follow up."

About one-half of the respondents said that follow up results are shared with members of local vocational advisory committees, and almost 40 percent said the results are seldom or never shared (Table 19, p. 48).

TABLE 9

PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING HOW WORTHWHILE THEY THINK FOLLOW UP RESULTS ARE IN TERMS OF THE RESOURCES (TIME, MONEY, ETC.) USED TO GET THE RESULTS

Persons Responding	Very Worth-while	Somewhat Worth-while	Of Very Little Value	Worth-less	N/A
School Districts:					
Local Vocational Directors	13%	49%	37%	0	2%
District Guidance Directors	9%	45%	38%	2%	6%
Average	11%	47%	37%	1%	4%
Community Colleges:					
Occupational Deans	19%	54%	27%	0	0
Guidance Directors	14%	57%	14%	0	14%
Follow Up Persons	25%	42%	17%	8%	8%
Average	19%	52%	21%	2%	6%
Area Vocational Centers:					
Center Directors	20%	36%	32%	8%	4%
Guidance Directors	20%	36%	44%	0	0
Average	20%	36%	38%	4%	2%
Comprehensive High Schools:					
Principals	6%	62%	31%	2%	0
Guidance Directors	16%	41%	34%	9%	0
Average	10%	53%	32%	5%	0
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	14%	48%	33%	3%	3%

TABLE 10

RESPONSES RECEIVED TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU THINK THERE IS A NEED TO CONTINUE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP?"

Persons Responding	Responses: Yes	No	N/A
School Districts:			
Local Vocational Directors	70%	24%	6%
District Guidance Directors	64%	28%	8%
Average	67%	26%	7%
Community Colleges:			
Occupational Deans	85%	12%	4%
Guidance Directors	86%	7%	7%
Follow Up Persons	83%	17%	0
Average	85%	11%	4%
Area Vocational Centers:			
Center Directors	76%	16%	8%
Guidance Directors	84%	12%	4%
Average	80%	14%	6%
Comprehensive High Schools:			
Principals	65%	33%	2%
Guidance Directors	64%	34%	2%
Average	65%	33%	2%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	71%	24%	5%

TABLE 11

RESPONSES RECEIVED TO THE QUESTION "IN YOUR OPINION, ARE THE RESULTS OF VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP USED AT THE STATE LEVEL FOR VOCATIONAL PLANNING?"

Persons Responding	Responses: Yes	No	N/A
School Districts:			
Local Vocational Directors	43%	46%	11%
District Guidance Directors	28%	51%	21%
Average	36%	48%	16%
Community Colleges:			
Occupational Deans	65%	31%	4%
Guidance Directors	50%	29%	21%
Follow Up Persons	58%	33%	8%
Average	60%	31%	10%
Area Vocational Centers:			
Center Directors	44%	40%	16%
Guidance Directors	36%	40%	24%
Average	40%	4 %	20%
Comprehensive High Schools:			
Principals	40%	42%	18%
Guidance Directors	39%	36%	25%
Average	39%	39%	21%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	42%	41%	17%

TABLE 12

RESPONSES AS TO THE DEGREE RESPONDENTS THINK FOLLOW UP RESULTS OFFER AN ACCURATE INDICATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAINING STUDENTS RECEIVED IN THE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Persons Responding	Always	Often	Seldom	Never	N/A
School Districts:					
Local Vocational Directors	2%	44%	51%	0	3%
District Guidance Directors	0	40%	53%	0	6%
Average	1%	43%	52%	0	5%
Community Colleges:					
Occupational Deans	4%	46%	46%	0	4%
Guidance Directors	7%	57%	21%	0	14%
Follow Up Persons	8%	75%	17%	0	0
Average	6%	56%	33%	0	6%
Area Vocational Centers:					
Center Directors	0	52%	44%	0	4%
Guidance Directors	8%	60%	32%	0	0
Average	4%	56%	38%	0	2%
Comprehensive High Schools:					
Principals	0	44%	55%	2%	0
Guidance Directors	0	39%	57%	2%	2%
Average	0	41%	56%	2%	1%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	2%	47%	48%	1%	3%

TABLE 13

RESPONDENTS' RATING AS TO HOW IMPORTANT THEY THINK FOLLOW UP RESULTS ARE IN EVALUATING VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Persons Responding	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Of Little Importance	Not Important	N/A
School Districts:					
Local Vocational Directors	14%	51%	35%	0	0
District Guidance Directors	13%	38%	47%	0	2%
Average	14%	45%	40%	0	1%
Community Colleges:					
Occupational Deans	12%	62%	23%	0	4%
Guidance Directors	14%	64%	7%	7%	7%
Follow Up Persons	25%	42%	25%	8%	0
Average	15%	58%	19%	4%	4%
Area Vocational Centers:					
Center Directors	32%	48%	16%	4%	0
Guidance Directors	16%	48%	32%	4%	0
Average	24%	48%	24%	4%	0
Comprehensive High Schools:					
Principals	13%	53%	33%	2%	0
Guidance Directors	13%	34%	50%	2%	0
Average	13%	44%	40%	2%	0
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	15%	48%	34%	2%	1%

TABLE 14

PERCENTAGE RANKING OF THE CRITERIA THOUGHT TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT IN DECIDING WHETHER TO CONTINUE OFFERING A VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

Criteria	Districts	Colleges	Area Centers	High Schools	Overall
Labor Market Supply & Demand Information	34%	35%	40%	38%	36%
Number of Students Enrolled	29%	31%	14%	26%	26%
Job-Related Placement Rates of Former Students	18%	17%	34%	7%	17%
Availability of Qualified Instructors	6%	2%	0	5%	4%
Other	4%	8%	2%	1%	3%
Adequate Facilities	1%	0	0	2%	1%
N/A	9%	8%	10%	20%	13%

TABLE 15

PERCENTAGE RANKING OF THE CRITERIA THOUGHT TO BE THE LEAST IMPORTANT IN DECIDING WHETHER TO CONTINUE OFFERING A VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

Criteria	Districts	Colleges	Area Centers	High Schools	Overall
Job-Related Placement Rates of Former Students	21%	17%	16%	37%	25%
Adequate Facilities	19%	25%	24%	15%	20%
Number of Students Enrolled	20%	10%	18%	16%	17%
Labor Market Supply & Demand Information	16%	15%	16%	12%	15%
Availability of Qualified Instructors	10%	8%	10%	8%	9%
Other	4%	14%	8%	0	5%
N/A	11%	12%	8%	11%	10%

TABLE 16

RESPONDENTS RATINGS AS TO HOW PROMPTLY THE RESULTS OF VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP ARE PROVIDED TO THEM

Persons Responding	Very Promptly	In Time To Be Useful	Too Late To Be Useful	Not Provided At All	N/A
School Districts:					
Local Vocational Directors	21%	35%	40%	0	5%
District Guidance Directors	15%	40%	25%	13%	6%
Average	18%	37%	34%	6%	6%
Community Colleges:					
Occupational Deans	23%	58%	15%	4%	0
Guidance Directors	14%	64%	7%	7%	7%
Follow Up Persons	50%	33%	0	0	17%
Average	27%	54%	10%	4%	6%
Area Vocational Centers:					
Center Directors	0	30%	52%	0	12%
Guidance Directors	4%	32%	44%	12%	8%
Average	2%	34%	48%	6%	10%
Comprehensive High Schools:					
Principals	5	65%	24%	4%	2%
Guidance Directors	14%	25%	48%	9%	4%
Average	9%	48%	34%	6%	3%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	14%	43%	32%	6%	6%

TABLE 17

RESPONDENTS' RATING OF THE PRIORITY THEY THINK THEIR DISTRICT/INSTITUTION ASSIGNS TO VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP

Persons Responding	High	Medium	Low	N/A
School Districts:				
Local Vocational Directors	11%	41%	44%	3%
District Guidance Directors	9%	53%	36%	2%
Average	10%	46%	41%	3%
Community Colleges:				
Occupational Deans	12%	62%	27%	0
Guidance Directors	14%	50%	36%	0
Follow Up Persons	25%	50%	25%	0
Average	15%	56%	29%	0
Area Vocational Centers:				
Center Directors	44%	44%	12%	0
Guidance Directors	24%	48%	20%	8%
Average	34%	46%	16%	4%
Comprehensive High Schools:				
Principals	24%	56%	20%	0
Guidance Directors	25%	41%	30%	4%
Average	24%	50%	24%	2%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	19%	49%	30%	2%

TABLE 18

OVERALL RESPONSES AS TO WHETHER AT THE DISTRICT/INSTITUTION LEVEL THERE WAS CONFUSION AS TO WHAT CERTAIN TERMS MEAN

Term	Is There Confusion As To This Term: Yes	No	N/A
Follow Up	14%	83%	3%
Placement	23%	74%	3%
Program Completer	44%	53%	2%
Program Leaver	43%	54%	3%

TABLE 19

PERCENT OF RESPONSES INDICATING THE DEGREE TO WHICH FOLLOW UP RESULTS ARE SHARED WITH MEMBERS OF LOCAL VOCATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Persons Responding	Degree to Which Results Are Shared: Always	Often	Seldom	Never	N/A
School Districts:					
Local Vocational Directors	13%	29%	49%	5%	5%
District Guidance Directors	6%	26%	43%	0	26%
Average	10%	27%	46%	3%	14%
Community Colleges:					
Occupational Deans	8%	58%	35%	0	0
Guidance Directors	21%	43%	21%	0	14%
Follow Up Persons	17%	42%	25%	17%	0
Average	14%	50%	29%	4%	4%
Area Vocational Centers:					
Center Directors	12%	44%	36%	4%	4%
Guidance Directors	20%	32%	36%	8%	4%
Average	16%	38%	36%	6%	4%
Comprehensive High Schools:					
Principals	24%	46%	18%	4%	9%
Guidance Directors	14%	34%	32%	2%	18%
Average	19%	40%	24%	3%	13%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	15%	37%	35%	4%	10%

Seventy-nine percent of those surveyed think that local labor market conditions have a "very great" or "moderate" effect on job related placement roles (Table 20, p. 50).

The respondents appeared to be split over their assessments of the adequacy of student placement services (Table 21, p. 51). Fifty percent said the services are more than adequate or adequate, and 47 percent indicated the services are less than adequate or inadequate. The lowest ratings come from school district offices and community colleges; the highest ratings were given by area center respondents.

Forty-three percent of all persons surveyed said that information about placement rates of former vocational students are seldomly shared with new vocational students (Table 22, p. 52). Eight percent said the results are always given to new students.

Twenty-nine percent of the respondents said that there was an Employment Services (ES) office operating in their school or a school within their district.

The most common placement service provided to vocational program leavers is "references to available jobs" (Table 23, p. 53). Among the "other" services provided are: Florida State Employment Service (FSES), cooperative education, and the Florida Occupational Information System (FLOIS).

Most respondents tended to rate the effectiveness of placement services as "moderately effective" or "slightly effective" (Table 24, p. 54). A large percentage of the people surveyed chose not to rate the services.

SUMMARY OF OPEN-END QUESTIONS

The last two items on the questionnaire asked those surveyed to list any suggestions they might have about improving the vocational student (1) follow up process, and (2) placement services. A listing of responses to these two items is found in Appendixes B and C (pp. 67-73).

In summary, the most frequent suggestions for improving the follow up process were:

- improve the forms used for follow up;
- conduct the follow up earlier in the year;
- do a better job of identifying which students are actually vocational students;
- provide more resources (funding, personnel) to do a better job; and
- give students better orientation about the follow up process and how they are involved.

TABLE 20

THE DEGREE TO WHICH PERSONS SURVEYED THINK THAT LOCAL LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS AFFECT THE RESULTS OF STUDENT FOLLOW UP, IN TERMS OF JOB-RELATED PLACEMENT RATES

Persons Responding	Very Great Effect	Moderate Effect	Very Little Effect	No Effect	N/A
School Districts:					
Local Vocational Directors	52%	24%	18%	2%	5%
District Guidance Directors	40%	28%	19%	6%	6%
Average	47%	26%	18%	4%	6%
Community Colleges:					
Occupational Deans	54%	35%	8%	4%	0
Guidance Directors	57%	21%	0	14%	7%
Follow Up Persons	50%	42%	8%	0	0
Average	54%	33%	6%	6%	2%
Area Vocational Centers:					
Center Directors	56%	36%	8%	0	0
Guidance Directors	60%	36%	0	0	4%
Average	58%	36%	4%	0	2%
Comprehensive High Schools:					
Principals	36%	42%	16%	4%	2%
Guidance Directors	41%	30%	30%	0	0
Average	38%	36%	22%	2%	1%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	47%	32%	15%	3%	3%

TABLE 21

RESPONDENTS' RATINGS OF THE ADEQUACY OF PLACEMENT SERVICES IN THEIR DISTRICT OR INSTITUTION

Persons Responding	More Than Adequate	Adequate	Less Than Adequate	Inadequate	N/A
School Districts:					
Local Vocational Directors	6%	21%	52%	16%	5%
District Guidance Directors	2%	38%	34%	17%	9%
Average	5%	28%	45%	16%	6%
Community Colleges:					
Occupational Deans	8%	50%	27%	15%	0
Guidance Directors	7%	36%	43%	14%	0
Follow Up Persons	8%	25%	50%	17%	0
Average	8%	40%	37%	15%	0
Area Vocational Centers:					
Center Directors	12%	60%	16%	4%	8%
Guidance Directors	28%	44%	24%	4%	0
Average	20%	52%	20%	4%	4%
Comprehensive High Schools:					
Principals	11%	51%	36%	2%	0
Guidance Directors	2%	52%	27%	16%	2%
Average	7%	52%	32%	8%	1%
OVERALL AVERAGE (WEIGHTED)	8%	42%	35%	12%	3%

TABLE 22

RESPONDENTS' RATING, BY DISTRICT OR INSTITUTION, AS TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH NEW VOCATIONAL STUDENTS ARE GIVEN INFORMATION ABOUT JOB-RELATED PLACEMENT RATES OF FORMER STUDENTS

Delivery Systems	Percent Responding: Always	Often	Seldom	Never	N/A
School Districts	5%	26%	53%	7%	10%
Community Colleges	6%	48%	37%	0	10%
Area Vocational Centers	18%	54%	28%	0	0
Comprehensive High Schools	7%	37%	42%	9%	4%
OVERALL WEIGHTED AVERAGE (PERCENT)	8%	38%	43%	6%	6%

TABLE 23

RESPONSES INDICATING WHAT PLACEMENT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO VOCATIONAL PROGRAM LEAVERS

Placement Services	Percent of respondents Indicating Placement Services that are provided by: Districts	Community Colleges	Area Vocational Centers	Comprehensive High Schools	Overall
Job Search Techniques	50%	56%	74%	55%	56%
References to Available Jobs	67%	67%	94%	69%	72%
CHOICES	68%	83%	84%	42%	65%
CAPS	29%	65%	68%	23%	40%
Academic Placement	32%	50%	28%	37%	36%
Agency Placement	18%	19%	60%	23%	27%
Other	10%	17%	22%	8%	13%
N/A	6%	0	0	10%	6%

TABLE 24

OVERALL RATINGS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLACEMENT SERVICES

Placement Services	Percent Rating Services As: Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Slightly Effective	Ineffective	N/A
CHOICES	18%	30%	19%	5%	28%
CAPS	4%	15%	23%	11%	47%
Follow Up	7%	29%	33%	5%	26%
Job Referral	24%	33%	18%	3%	22%
Academic Placement	12%	27%	16%	3%	43%
Agency Placement	5%	22%	18%	6%	49%

The most often mentioned suggestions for improving placement services were:

- the provision of more resources, including funding, personnel, and equipment;
- the establishment of closer working ties with business and industry; and
- the provision of incentives for high placement rates.

PART IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

After reviewing both the findings of the state level assessment and the results of the local level survey the FSAC concludes that:

1. The primary use of vocational student follow up results is to comply with state and national requirements. Local educators are more inclined than state level personnel to use the data to improve programs;

2. There are serious and widespread doubts at both the state and local levels about the validity of vocational student follow up data;

3. The major reasons follow up data are perceived as invalid relate to low response rates; confusion over how to use the data; delays in getting the data; and problems in identifying which students are actually job preparatory;

4. There is a need for technical assistance to be provided to local education personnel in how to effectively conduct follow up;

5. It is highly questionable as to whether the results of vocational student follow up should be used in evaluating vocational education programs;

6. Local labor market conditions should be considered when interpreting the results of vocational student follow up;

7. Local education agencies need to improve the process whereby follow up results are shared with vocational advisory committee members and new vocational students;

8. There appears to be a relatively large degree of confusion at the state and local levels over the use of some terms used in the vocational student placement and follow up processes;

9. It appears as if one of the most effective ways to improve the response rates for vocational student follow up would be to improve the orientation process students are given concerning follow up;

10. There is a need to increase the coordination of follow up activities, particularly at the state level;

11. The state should explore the feasibility of using unemployment insurance (UI) file data to assist in collecting placement information from school district vocational job preparatory completers; and

12. Significant improvements are doubtful in the overall statewide placement and follow up efforts unless state and local agencies are willing to commit additional resources including personnel, facilities, funding, and time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions resulting from the study discussed in this report. It is noted that the first five recommendations were included in the Council's FY 1983 Annual Evaluation Report.

1. The State Board of Vocational Education should require improvements in the policies and procedures related to the placement and follow up of job preparatory vocational students. Specific improvements should be directed toward:

   A. A determination of the feasibility at the state level on the use of unemployment insurance (UI) computerized information for follow up purposes. This information might be further improved by the inclusion of occupational identifiers on the employer reporting forms;

   B. The development and adoption of State Board policies which would require all state agencies involved in placement and follow up activities to coordinate these activities. Coordination should include the elimination of duplicated follow ups; the routine and systematic interagency sharing of information resulting from student follow up; and a determination by all involved state agencies as to the uses which will be made at the state level of the results of follow up.

2. The State Board of Vocational Education should not use the results of vocational student follow up to evaluate the effectiveness of vocational programs until such time as measures have been taken to improve the validity of information collected through the follow up process.

3. Procedures used to follow up vocational students can be improved by (a) means of carefully designed panel studies, and (b) sampling of nonrespondents. The data collected through these improved procedures should be used to conduct longitudinal studies of vocational completers.

4. Criteria in addition to training related job placement should be developed for evaluating the effectiveness of vocational programs.

5. The Department of Education should provide increased technical assistance to local education agencies in methods of improving follow up procedures. The technical assistance should focus on those needs identified in this study.

6. Local education agencies should make needed improvements in their vocational student placement and follow up procedures by:

   A. Sharing the results of vocational student follow up results with all groups involved in vocational education, including local advisory committee members and new vocational students;

   B. Providing presently enrolled students with a better orientation about the need to respond to the forthcoming survey, and explaining how the results will be used to improve their program; and

   C. Taking steps to speed up the process whereby follow up results are provided in a timely and efficient manner.

7. The Department of Education should work with representatives from local education agencies to develop standard procedures which can be easily used by educators at the local level to identify:

   A. Which students should actually be classified as job preparatory, and should thus be included in the follow up process; and

   B. The meanings of the terms follow up, placement, program leaver, and program completer.

APPENDIXES

61

APPENDIX A

THE TYPES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS WHICH WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES IN CONDUCTING VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP.

Help in interpreting state requirements for follow up.

Help in setting up standard procedures.

Help in setting up computer programs to get more accurate data used in placement and follow up.

Discussion about new forms or provision of adequate directions for any new forms well in advance of form distribution.

Standardization of definitions and sharing of effective techniques.

A workshop to make sure everyone is completing the forms and reporting the information according to "common definitions."

Aid in construction of instruments to be used.

Personal contact with those doing surveys to determine if proper techniques are being used.

Improve the readability of the questionnaire. Make the format attractive so former students will fill it out.

Inservice for teachers and administrators on the relevance of an accurate follow up survey would be invaluable.

Need help in interpretation of data and how to use it to improve the total program.

Interpretation of results as they apply to the curriculum.

Develop simple, short, easy-to-read questionnaires. No more than one page at most.

Workshops and seminars to develop workable working documents (i.e., brainstorming sessions).

Those persons who have outstanding successful follow up programs can share "in detail" what they are doing and how they are doing it.

More personnel and funds.

Information on improving responses and techniques and rates of return.

How to develop very short forms.

We should go to statewide sampling technique similar to the polling done in politics and marketing.

How to get responses from employers.

A computerized local arrangement for continuous follow up.

Management techniques for organizing and running surveys.

How to improve the format. One county has a committee set up for the 1982-83 follow up. This committee is working with other counties to make the annual follow up more productive.

Money provided to instructors to help with placement and follow up.

Telephone survey assistance.

Provide lists of information attained by state from the social security file.

It would help to have a "canned" program on how to impress the students about the importance of a response to the mailers.

How to best use the resources available in the community to complete the follow up survey.

How to efficiently compile data received.

Professional questionnaire designing.

Set up a full-time office of placement and follow up at each community college and area vocational-technical center.

Go over definitions on completers and leavers so there's uniformity.

How to coordinate activities to do the job well.

How to maintain consistency.

Hints to streamline the process (i.e., pre-addressed envelopes, mailers, use of addressographs).

Tape format for data processing needs revision.

Administrative use of collected data.

Develop statewide network.

Models of dissemination.

DVE to listen to suggestions for rewording questions.

When, where, how: from beginning to end.

Outside agency to conduct survey using computers, etc.

Complete evaluation is needed. There's a big difference between small rural and larger urban districts when it comes to concerns.

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY PERSONNEL AS TO WHAT IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN THE VOCATIONAL STUDENT FOLLOW UP PROCESS.

More conformity in reporting among community colleges.

Low administrative priority is a problem. The coordinator has little clerical help and is a full-time counselor with many other responsibilities at the coordinator level. The state should require minimal personnel and resources at the local level to assure adequate review.

Faculty advisors and teachers need to be more active in the follow up process.

Funding is needed to computerize the local process.

Sharing of effective techniques is needed.

Personalization of the student questionnaire. Maybe make it a requirement prior to graduation or the sending of transcripts.

Integrate the Florida Occupational Information System (FLOIS) by utilizing the Department of Labor (i.e., unemployment compensation) and Social Security Administration data into the system coupled with placement and follow up efforts.

All appropriate data should be provided so follow up can be conducted in a workable format.

Follow up should be totally local and final results then sent to the state. Now, there's too much time lag from the time the information is in to the time the information comes out.

Hold an annual student orientation regarding follow up. Students need to know how important the follow up is before they leave school.

Follow up with a warm body, not an IBM scan sheet.

Provide a uniform statewide system which responds quickly with timely data.

Follow up must take place as soon as possible.

Need more personnel.

Long term studies (i.e., 5-year, 10-year). Professional interpretation of placement.

Improve forms.

Final class report termination codes: leave "c" completer code as is; L1 should mean leavers with marketable skills in at least one competency area and recommended for employment; and L2 to be program drop-outs. Due to competency based vocational education 50 percent plus or minus L1 and L2 codes is irrelevant.

Improve our techniques in exit interviews so we can get current information from employers.

As a first step, use phone calls, not mail outs. Involve instructors.

Look into use of social security numbers from Employment Security for follow up.

Considerations given to high unemployment areas.

We need to take a close look at why we are following up on students. If the information is not used at the state level or by the schools, why are we spending a lot of time and money to get this information? How reliable is this information? Can we really use it for decision making?

Conduct follow up no sooner than every three years.

Set up a college supported placement service office.

Reduce requirements for contacting employers of leavers and completers of every program every year to once every two years per program. Rotate each program so that the same employers are not overkilled with questionnaires.

Do not request exact salary information from students; they balk and refuse to respond to anything.

Institution should be furnished with follow up questionnaires no later than November of the school year to be reported.

Earlier date for follow up (January or February). Provide money for postage, phone calls, and occupational specialists.

Vocational teachers should have information on "completers" and "leavers." Occupational specialist has to research this (time consuming).

Explain importance to student before they graduate.

Only deal with program completers.

Make sure list of students to be contacted are actually vocational program students, not persons who just took one class.

Students would be more honest if their surveys were mailed to the county or state and not directly to the school.

A random mailing system should be developed. It is a waste of time and tax money to have a counselor spend the number of hours in clerical work to mail to every student.

Evaluate the program before students leave. Then the job placement portion could be done randomly a year later from the state department.

Need resources for phone calls and postage.

Develop a new form. List actual course that the student completed. Do not follow up on students still in school (20 percent of my follow ups are still in school).

Home visitation needed.

District services should work more with schools to communicate results more effectively.

In self-addressed envelopes, include incentives (i.e., football game ticket).

My community does not care about or support labor data so students must leave our area to work. Therefore, do away with it.

Set time limits and adhere to them.

Brief, simple forms needed.

Expedite the identification of students to be surveyed by improving the Vocational Education Data on Occupational Students (VEDOS) system.

Get instructors to code properly.

Define completers uniformly.

Follow up six months after leaving the program. Current procedures (open/entry, open/exit) cause some to be followed up 18 months later.

Agency other than school system should handle the process.

Follow up two years after the student leaves.

Allow large counties to survey scientifically chosen valid random samples.

Return district responsibility for follow up to vocational departments. This will provide a full circle from final class reports through follow up under one department.

Send follow ups during summer.

Advertise your qualified people. Send brochures out to local businesses.

Time frame too long.

Revise definitions of business programs in order to reflect courses offered in schools, thus arriving at a realistic identification of completers and leavers (i.e., have state level personnel determine at what stage, the number of hours or courses, a business student becomes a vocational student). Until this is accomplished, all follow up data on business students will be inaccurate.

Recognize that objectives for high school students in the course is different from a community college or area vocational-technical center student.

Materials in hand given to us early.

Part-timers used for follow up.

Follow up on a three-year basis. Samples, not total groups, are needed.

DVE mandatory questions need to be revised.

Use social workers to visit former students.

If the state were to send us the pre-printed and addressed forms as they used to, the process would be more effective.

Earmark funds legislatively to support follow up services on a per student cost basis.

Eliminate program funding if less than 60 percent placement rates.

Full-time persons (well-trained) needed.

Do not limit mail outs to a set calendar time but by length of time after completion.

Require administrators to share uses of follow up data with groups (i.e., school boards).

Area-wide analysis by coordinating councils. Provide money and resources to accomplish tasks.

Each teacher should perform own follow up as part of job responsibility.

Implement a sharing process of successful techniques utilized by other local education agencies. To be useful, the shared ideas must be very specific.

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY PERSONNEL AS TO WHAT IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN THE VOCATIONAL STUDENT PLACEMENT SERVICES.

Program entry requirements are needed. Why permit an individual to enter a program he or she will be impossible to place due to physical or mental requirements?

Involve faculty more in the advising process.

State funds are needed for this mandated service.

Fund the placement office as an essential part of vocational education.

Internal marketing and articulation with business and industry.

Establish a three- to four-year dollar-for-dollar matching fund to create a placement office at the smaller institutions and vo-tech centers.

More staff and modern equipment are needed.

Enforce the law which already requires placement activities. This will force the local education agencies to hire placement personnel.

Industry must be brought in to interview our students.

Place an Employment Service office in all area vo-tech centers.

Better career planning prior to student entering the program.

Provide incentives to instructors for high placement figures in different programs.

More services like CHOICES are needed. Take money used for CAPS and utilize on programs like these.

Why should vocational programs be judged by the number of people working in the field for which trained? How many colleges are responsible in the area? Even though vocational students may not be working in the field for which trained, many other doors of opportunity seem to open for them. They usually end up with better paying jobs and have a higher standard of living even though they may not be working in the field. Doesn't this have some value?

Establish occupational specialist positions based on percentage ratios of vocational completers/leavers.

Entrance requirements for programs created and/or enforced.

Better use of faculty as primary "placers" of students.

Results should be given by each individual industrial program rather than being lumped together.

All job placement or inquiries should be channeled through a centralized occupational placement specialist center.

Have Florida State Employment Service office counselor deal with our students. We do adequate referrals, not actual placement.

Give results earlier to those persons connected with vocational education programs.

Closer ties with business leaders in the community needed.

Primary effort belongs in occupational specialist's office, not with guidance counselor.

Make it mandatory.

Fund employment service offices in every community high school.

Give students opportunities to visit job sites related to their vocational programs.

Community interaction vital.

Categorial funding of occupational specialist positions and placement specialists.

Workshop: How small rural districts with limited funds can have an effective program.

Expand access to Florida State Employment Service job information by providing a computer terminal at each site.

Discontinue follow up in rural areas where family agriculture is the chief occupation.

Clear uniform definitions.

Return responsibility to district vocational departments.

System needs appeals process.

Require it as part of eleven-month service requirement for all vocational department heads in the U.S.

Part-timers used for placement.

APPENDIX D

Sample cover letter sent with questionnaire to local education agencies.

FLORIDA STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

on

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

RALPH D. TURLINGTON
Commissioner
of Education

W. V. KNOTT BUILDING
TALLAHASSEE 32301
904/488-5308

DR. JAMES A. CULLIGAN
Council
Executive Director

Mr Eugene A. Poole
Chairman
Lowell

Mrs Katie Keene
Vice Chairman
Tampa

Mrs Joan W. Aussad
Jacksonville

Mr Edward Bleckner Jr
Miami

Mr L Nelson Dennell
Cocoa

Mr James S Doyle
Miami

Mrs Martha Franklin
Lakeland

Mr John H Frazer Jr
Tallahassee

Ms Kathy Garcia
Miami

Mr Lawrence R Hawkins
Perrine

Mr Thomas E Kessler
Orlando

Mr C M Lawrence
Bushnell

Dr Manuel J Leon
Coral Gables

Mrs Helen K Lasko
St Petersburg

Mrs Evelyn J Lewis
Ft Lauderdale

Mrs Judy Lima
Tampa

Mr David H Lindemann
Ft Lauderdale

Dr Wayne C Malone
Dade City

Mr Bobby F McKown
Lakeland

Mr Jarrell G Melvin
Fort Walton Beach

Mr Thomas Mills
West Palm Beach

Mr Charles A Perez
Ft Lauderdale

Dr Herbert E Phillips
Lake City

Dr Carl W Proehl
Pensacola

Mr Wayne D Rolph
Crystal River

Dr Charles A Russell
Tallahassee

Mrs Margaret B Sanna
Palm Bay

Mrs Gloria Shumate
St Petersburg

Dr Howard K Suzuki
Gainesville

Mrs Jackie Young
Riviera Beach

September, 1983

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your help in a matter of statewide importance to vocational education. We are conducting an evaluation of policies and procedures relating to the placement and follow up of job preparatory vocational education students. In order to successfully complete the study, we need information from local decision makers such as you. The Council will use the results from this study to form the basis of possible recommendations to the State Board of Vocational Education; i.e., the Cabinet.

We have enclosed a questionnaire which we would like for you to complete and return to us as soon as possible. The questionnaires have been coded only for the purpose of determining response rates. You should be able to complete the survey form in only a few minutes and without leaving your desk. There are no right or wrong answers to the questionnaire: all we want are your opinions.

Responses to this survey will be recorded only by groups, not by individual institutions or districts. The results of the study will be shared with you after the study is completed, and the final report has been approved.

Thank you for your continued assistance to our Council.

Sincerely,

James A. Culligan

wb

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

APPENDIX D
(continued)

DIRECTIONS: Most of the questions require only a check (✓) response opposite the item. On open-ended questions, please feel free to write as much as you care. Remember that all questions about former students refer to job preparatory students.

1. At your institution, what person is most directly responsible for conducing follow up of former vocational students: (check one):

_____ guidance director
_____ occupational specialist
_____ principal
_____ area center director
_____ occupational dean
_____ vocational teachers
_____ institutional researcher
_____ other (please identify) _____

2. During a school year, how often does your institution conduct foilow up of former vocational students? (check one)

_____ none
_____ once
_____ twice
_____ more than two times

3. What persons at your institution are given the results of vocational student follow up? (check all that apply)

_____ vocational teachers
_____ guidance director
_____ occupational specialist
_____ principal
_____ occupational dean
_____ other college administrators
_____ area center director
_____ no one
_____ other (please identify) _____

4. What uses are made of the results of vocational student follow up? (check all that apply)

_____ improve programs
_____ change curriculum
_____ teacher evaluations
_____ comply with state requirements
_____ student counseling
_____ facility planning
_____ not used
_____ other (specify) _____

5. Do you think the data provided through student follow up are valid?

_____ yes - (Skip question 6)
_____ no - (Please answer question 6)

6. If you answered "no" to question 5, why do you think that follow up data are not valid? (check all that apply)

_____ low response rate
_____ wrong questions asked
_____ confusion over how to interpret the results
_____ results are not shared in time to be useful
_____ problems in identifying which students are job preparatory
_____ other (specify) _____

7. What do you think are the main reasons for low response rates to student follow up? (check all that apply)

_____ poorly worded questions
_____ questionnaire too long
_____ questionnaire mailed too soon after student completes
_____ questionnaire mailed too late after student completes
_____ low priority at the institution
_____ problems with mailing
_____ other (specify) _____

8. What methods are used at your institution to get follow up information? (Check all that apply)

_____ mail questionnaires
_____ personal visits to nonrespondents
_____ phone calls
_____ unemployment insurance (UI) files
_____ other (specify) _____

9. Do you think there is a need for technical assistance to be provided on how to effectively conduct student follow up?

_____ yes
_____ no

10. If you think there is a need for technical assistance, what type of technical assistance would be most helpful to you and your institution?

_____

_____

_____

11. How worthwhile do you think vocational student follow up results are in terms of the resources (time, money, etc.) used to get the results? (✓ one)

_____ very worthwhile
_____ somewhat worthwhile
_____ of very little value
_____ worthless

12. Do you think there is a need to continue the requirement for vocational student follow up?

_____ yes _____ no

13. In your opinion, are the results of vocational student follow up used at the state level for vocational planning?

_____ yes _____ no

14. To what degree do you think that student follow up results offer an accurate indication of the effectiveness of the training the students received in the vocational programs?

_____ always _____ often _____ seldom _____ never

15. How important do you think follow up results are in evaluating vocational programs at your institution?

_____ very important
_____ somewhat important
_____ of little importance
_____ not important

16. Which one of the criteria listed below do you think is the <u>most</u> important criterion you would use in deciding whether to continue offering a vocational program?

_____ number of students enrolled
_____ availability of qualified instructor
_____ labor market supply and demand information
_____ job-related placement rates of former students
_____ adequate facilities
_____ other (specify) _____

17. Which one of the criteria listed below do you think is the <u>least</u> important criterion you would use in deciding whether to continue offering a vocational program?

_____ number of students enrolled
_____ availability of qualified instructor
_____ labor market supply and demand information
_____ job-related placement rates of former students
_____ adequate facilities
_____ other (specify) _____

18. How promptly are the results of vocational student follow up provided to you?

_____ very promptly
_____ in time to be useful
_____ too late to be useful
_____ not provided at all

19. In general, what kind of priority do you think your institution assigns to vocational student follow up?

_____ high priority
_____ medium priority
_____ low priority

20. Listed below are some terms related to vocational student placement and follow up. Please indicate by a check mark whether or not you think that, at your institution, there is any confusion as to what the terms mean (i.e., in general, do the people involved in placement and follow up at your institution seem to be consistent in their use of these terms.)

Term:	Is there confusion as to this term? Yes	No
Follow up	_____	_____
Placement	_____	_____
Program completer	_____	_____
Program leaver	_____	_____

21. To what degree are the results of vocational student follow up shared with members of vocational advisory committees?

_____ always
_____ often
_____ seldom
_____ never

22. To what degree do you think local labor market conditions affect the results of student follow up, in terms of job-related placement rates?

_____ very great effect
_____ moderate effect
_____ very little effect
_____ no effect

23. How adequate do you think the student placement services are at your institution?

_____ more than adequate
_____ adequate
_____ less than adequate
_____ inadequate

24. To what degree are new vocational students given information about job related placement rates of former students?

_____ always _____ seldom
_____ often _____ never

25. Is there an Employment Security (ES) office operating in your institution to assist in placements?

_____ yes _____ no

26. What services are provided by your school to vocational program leavers as part of your placement services? (check all that apply)

_____ job search techniques
_____ references to available jobs
_____ CHOICES
_____ CAPS
_____ academic placement
_____ agency placement
_____ other (specify) _____

27. Please rate the overall effectiveness of these placement services:

	RATING:			
Service	very effective	moderately effective	slightly effective	ineffective
CHOICES	_____	_____	_____	_____
CAPS	_____	_____	_____	_____
Follow up	_____	_____	_____	_____
Job referral	_____	_____	_____	_____
Academic placement	_____	_____	_____	_____
Agency placement	_____	_____	_____	_____

28. Please list any suggestions you have for improving the vocational student follow up process: _____

_____

_____

29. Please list any suggestions you have for improving vocational student placement services: _____

_____

_____

_____

(please use back side if additional space is needed)

State of Florida
Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida
Ralph D. Turlington, Commissioner
Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

This public document was promulgated at an annual cost of $759.11 or $1.52 per copy to inform the citizens of Florida about student placement and follow up in vocational job preparatory programs in Florida.

FLORIDA: A STATE OF EDUCATIONAL DISTINCTION. "On a statewide average, educational achievement in the State of Florida will equal that of the upper quartile of states within five years, as indicated by commonly accepted criteria of attainment."